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U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20229



U.S. Customs and
Border Protection

Commissioner

October 17, 2006

MEMORANDUM FOR: DONALD H. KENT
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY
LEGISLATIVE AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

FROM: W. Ralph Basham (b) (6)
for Commissioner

SUBJECT: Response to Congresswoman Granger

Congresswoman Kay Granger has written to express her concerns regarding the Agents assigned to the duties of coordination of barrier fence site selection possess the appropriate knowledge level for the geographic and jurisdictional needs of the construction area, and that the local authorities will be brought into the process of construction.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection has prepared a response assuring Congresswoman Granger that geographical, jurisdictional, and operational needs are met, and that these officials work with state and local governments, local landowners, and other Federal agencies during the planning and construction of infrastructure. This document has been reviewed and coordinated with Mr. (b) (6) Assistant Chief Counsel (Enforcement), Office of Chief Counsel, at (b) (6)

I recommend that you sign the attached response.

Attachment

Executive Secretariat Clearance:

Fred L. Schwein

Date

Cleared by:
OGC - (b) (6)
LIA - (b) (6)
PDEV for Policy - (b) (6)

149A

912 Matamoros Street
Laredo, Texas 78040
Phone: 956- (b) (6)
Fax: 956- (b) (6)

CITY OF LAREDO**Fax**

To: Secretary Michael Chertoff **From:** (b) (6) Legislative Liaison
Fax: **Date:** September 21, 2006
Phone: **Pages:** 4 including cover sheet
Re: Opposition to H.R. 6061-
Secure Fence Act
Letter and Resolution

☐ Urgent ☐ For Review ☐ Please Comment ☐ Please Reply ☐ Please Recycle

•Comments:

Greetings:

Please see the following letter and resolution from the City of Laredo, Texas regarding our opposition to H.R. 6061 "The Secure Fence" bill being debated in the Senate.

We welcome the opportunity to share our thoughts on this with you.

Thank you.

2006 SEP 22 PM 12:34



CITY OF LAREDO

RAUL G. SALINAS
Mayor

September 20, 2006

Secretary Michael Chertoff
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Chertoff:

Recently, the immigration issue has been tied to America's homeland security and the debate has been an extremely dividing factor among this country's citizens. Laredo is one of the nation's oldest cities, a thriving border community, and we not only understand, but know how to deal with immigration and protect our country's borders.

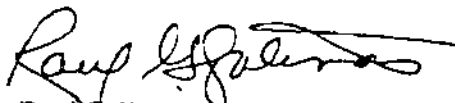
While we recognize that this country needs a strong, fair policy to address immigration and implement realistic and effective homeland security measures, the City of Laredo is opposed to building a border fence as a solution to this issue.

In fact, the Laredo City Council recently passed resolution 2006-R-086 that states we will only support legislation that serves in the best interest of our citizens and the community. We believe a border fence would be detrimental to our border community, as well as send the wrong message about the relationship the United States has with its neighbors and destroy the image of this country as a welcoming nation of and founded by immigrants.

I welcome the opportunity to speak with you on this issue. Because Laredo is the number one inland trade port for the United States and the city has a vibrant, growing community boosted by trade and immigrants, I know we can provide you with a broader perspective – a border perspective – on the issue of immigration, homeland security and the dynamics of the southern U.S. border and its role in helping our country's economy.

Please contact me at (956) (b) (6) to discuss this issue further.

Respectfully,


Raul Salinas

RESOLUTION NO. 2006-R-086

SUPPORTING THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY BY CALLING ON THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS AND PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH TO APPROVE LEGISLATION AS RECOMMENDED BY THE TEXAS BORDER COALITION, AS AMENDED BY THE CITY OF LAREDO; AND AMENDING THE CITY OF LAREDO FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDAS TO INCLUDE SUCH.

WHEREAS, the Texas Border Coalition has been a collective force of border Mayors, County Judges, and communities on issues that affect the City's way of life; and

WHEREAS, the City of Laredo supports the Department of Homeland Security when it states in its goals for the U.S. VISIT program that both the President of the United States and Congress mandated that border security enhancement not adversely affect legitimate trade and travel.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LAREDO THAT:

Section 1: The City of Laredo City Council calls on Congress and The President of the United States to approve legislation that:


- a. Strengthens border security;
- b. Includes a fair and efficient guest worker program;
- c. Provides a path to citizenship for the millions of undocumented individuals in the United States provided that: they have not committed serious crimes, they pay taxes and social security on their earnings;
- d. Does not require cities to enforce immigration violations;
- e. Opposes the construction of security fencing along the United States side of the Rio Grande River;
- f. Upating and constructing new border infrastructure to meet long term demand;
- g. Includes the appropriate number of work visas that is driven by the market allowing workers of many skill levels to come to our country legally;
- h. Provides funding to properly integrate all communication systems at our ports of entry, thereby achieving a true sense of security;
- i. Provides the hiring of additional Customs and Border Protection agents to facilitate trade and traffic;
- j. Provides the resources so an American citizen can continue the enjoyment of their neighbors to the South by using their driver's license or another form of valid photo identification with the added technology that is required by the federal government to achieve security; and
- k. Extends the deadline that requires all Americans to have a passport to reenter the U.S. after visiting a foreign country, to allow time to develop a more cost effective and efficient form of identification for crossing.

Section 2: The City Secretary shall forward a copy of this resolution the President of the United States and all members of Congress.

PASSED BY THE CITY COUNCIL AND APPROVED BY THE MAYOR on this, the 28th day of August, 2006.


RAUL G. SALINAS
MAYOR

ATTEST:


GUSTAVO GUEVARA, JR.
CITY SECRETARY

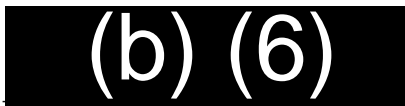
APPROVED AS TO FORM:


JAIME L. FLORES
CITY ATTORNEY

STATE OF TEXAS
COUNTY OF WEBB
CITY OF LAREDO

I, Gustavo Guevara, Jr., City Secretary for the City of Laredo, Texas do hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true and correct copy of Resolution 2006-R-086 approved by City Council on August 28th, 2006.

WITNESS MY HAND AND THE CORPORATE SEAL OF THE CITY OF LAREDO, TEXAS ON THIS THE 20th Day of SEPTEMBER 2006.


Gustavo Guevara, Jr.
City Secretary



**U.S. Customs and
Border Protection**

OCT 4 2006

The Honorable Raul Salinas
Mayor of Laredo, Texas
P.O. Box 579
Laredo, Texas 78042

Dear Mayor Salinas:

Thank you for your letter of September 20, 2006, to Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Michael Chertoff, expressing the city of Laredo's position in regards to the construction of a fence on the border between the United States and Mexico. U.S. Customs and Border Protection has recently reviewed this issue. Please allow me to outline our findings.

The Secure Fence Act of 2006 includes language which authorizes DHS to provide for at least two layers of reinforced fencing, the installation of additional physical barriers, roads, lighting, cameras, and sensors extending 15 miles northwest of the Laredo, Texas, port of entry to the Brownsville, Texas, port of entry.

DHS believes that the right mix of personnel, technology, and tactical infrastructure is essential to securing operational control of the border. Moving forward with the comprehensive Secure Border Initiative (SBI) and the recently awarded SBInet contract to the Boeing Corporation, DHS is working to develop the most effective mix of current and next-generation technology, infrastructure, staffing and response platforms to transform border control technology and infrastructure.

DHS looks forward to working with you and the City of Laredo to find the best use of resources for securing the U.S. Border in Laredo and surrounding areas.

Thank you for your interest in Customs and Border Protection. If we may offer further assistance, please contact me at (202) (b) (6)

Sincerely,

(b) (6)

 Thaddeus M. Bingel
Assistant Commissioner
Office of Congressional Affairs

(b) (6)

THE WHITE HOUSE OFFICE
REFERRAL

October 27, 2006

TO: DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

ACTION REQUESTED: ORIGINATOR

DESCRIPTION OF INCOMING:

ID: 709309

MEDIA: LETTER

DOCUMENT DATE: OCTOBER 10, 2006

TO: PRESIDENT BUSH

FROM: (b) (6)
U.S. CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS
WASHINGTON, DC 20017

SUBJECT: REQUESTS THAT THE PRESIDENT VETO HR 6061 THE SECURE
FENCE ACT OF 06

COMMENTS:

2006 NOV -1 AM 11:34
RECEIVED/R.O. 11/1/06
BY EXEC SEC

PROMPT ACTION IS ESSENTIAL -- IF REQUIRED ACTION HAS NOT BEEN TAKEN WITHIN 9
WORKING DAYS OF RECEIPT, UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED, PLEASE TELEPHONE THE
UNDERSIGNED AT (b) (6)

RETURN **ORIGINAL** CORRESPONDENCE, WORKSHEET AND COPY OF RESPONSE (OR DRAFT)
TO: DOCUMENT TRACKING UNIT, ROOM 84, OFFICE OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT - THE WHITE
HOUSE, 20500

THE WHITE HOUSE DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT AND TRACKING WORKSHEET



DATE RECEIVED:

CASE ID: 709309

NAME OF CORRESPONDENT: MOST REVEREND (b) (6)

SUBJECT: REQUESTS THAT THE PRESIDENT VETO HR 6061 THE SECURE FENCE ACT OF 06

ROUTE TO: AGENCY/OFFICE (STAFF NAME)	ACTION		DISPOSITION		
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY	ORG	10/27/2006			

ACTION COMMENTS:

ACTION COMMENTS:

ACTION COMMENTS:

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COMMENTS:

MEDIA: LETTER

USER CODE:

**SCANNED
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ACTION CODES			
A - APPROPRIATE ACTION B - RESEARCH AND REPORT BACK D - DRAFT RESPONSE I - INFO COPY/NO ACT NECESSARY R - DIRECT REPLY W/ COPY	TYPE RESPONSE: TYPE RESPONSE = INITIALS OF SIGNER NRN = NO RESPONSE NEEDED	DISPOSITION CODES: A - ANSWERED/ ACKNOWLEDGED C - CLOSED X - INTERIM REPLY	COMPLETED DATE: COMPLETED = DATE OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OR CLOSE- OUT DATE (MM/DD/YY)

REFER QUESTIONS AND ROUTING UPDATES TO DOCUMENT TRACKING UNIT (ROOM 84, OEOB) EXT-(b) (6) KEEP THIS WORKSHEET ATTACHED TO THE ORIGINAL INCOMING LETTER AT ALL TIMES AND SEND COMPLETED RECORD TO OFFICE OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Homeland Security



709309

Office of the President

3211 FOURTH STREET NE • WASHINGTON DC 20017-1194 • 202-541-3100 • FAX 202-541-3166

Most Reverend William S. Skylstad, D.D.
Bishop of Spokane

October 10, 2006

Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20502

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, I write to ask that you veto H.R. 6061, the Secure Fence Act of 2006. As you know, H.R. 6061 would authorize the construction of up to 700 miles of fencing and barriers along our southern border with Mexico, among other provisions.

To be clear, the U.S. Catholic bishops are supportive of efforts to enforce immigration law and secure our borders, so long as the mechanisms and strategies applied toward this end protect human dignity and protect human life.

However, we are opposed to this legislation because we believe it could lead to the deaths of migrants attempting to enter the United States and increased smuggling-related violence along our border. We also believe it would send the wrong signal to our peaceful neighbor to the south, Mexico, as well as the international community. Finally, we do not believe it will solve the problem of illegal immigration faced by our nation.

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) recently found that migrant deaths have doubled since 1995, about the time that the government initiated a series of border enforcement initiatives designed to stem illegal entries at ports-of-entry and other traditional crossing routes. Since that time, close to 3,000 migrants have died in remote portions of the southwest region of the country.

In our estimation, the erection of a border fence would force migrants, desperate to find employment to support their families, to seek alternative and more dangerous ways to enter the country, contributing to an increase in deaths, including among women and children. It also would drive migrants to depend upon unscrupulous smugglers, who would exploit them and, in some cases, place them in dangerous situations which may cause them harm.

As you know, Mr. President, the U.S. Catholic bishops believe that the defense of human life at all stages is of utmost importance and priority.

Honorable George W. Bush
October 10, 2006
Page Two

Another likely result of a border fence is an increase, not decrease, in smuggling-related violence, as smuggling networks may attempt to devise more elaborate and, in some cases, more confrontational schemes to smuggle persons into the country. Increased competition among smuggling gangs could lead to more violence in border communities. As Department of Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff recently stated, violence against Border Patrol agents increased over 100 percent in 2005.


We also feel strongly that the erection of a 700-mile border fence would send a signal to Mexico and other countries in the hemisphere that the United States is not willing to work cooperatively to address the problem of illegal immigration. It could harm our relations with these countries and inhibit bilateral progress on mutual interests. As the world's greatest democracy and lone superpower, our nation should be able to address the issue of illegal immigration without resorting to the construction of fences and barriers.

Finally, Mr. President, we do not believe that a border fence will solve the immigration crisis in our nation. As you may know, close to one-half of all persons residing without documentation enter the country legally and overstay their visas. Moreover, as the Catholic Church is a universal organization which witnesses the economic conditions in sending countries such as Mexico, we do not believe that a fence will deter persons desperate to escape poverty from seeking employment in our country. From this universal perspective, we strongly feel that the development of just global economic and trade policies designed to help create living wage jobs in countries of origin would permit persons to remain home and support themselves and their families.

Mr. President, the U.S. Catholic bishops have appreciated your leadership on immigration and your support of comprehensive immigration reform. It is our view that the best way to secure our border is through the enactment of a comprehensive immigration reform measure, not by the construction of a border fence.

We hope that you will agree with this assessment and veto H.R. 6061, the Secure Fence Act of 2006.

Sincerely yours,



(b) (6)

Bishop of Spokane
President, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops



01-002

Office of the President

3211 FOURTH STREET NE • WASHINGTON DC 20017-1194

✓ #104

Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20502

Express



F. Neenan X 3044
OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT LIAISON
3211 FOURTH STREET NE • WASHINGTON, DC 20017-1119

Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20502

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 THE WHITE HOUSE
 1600 PENNSYLVANIA AVE NW

WASHINGTON, DC 20502

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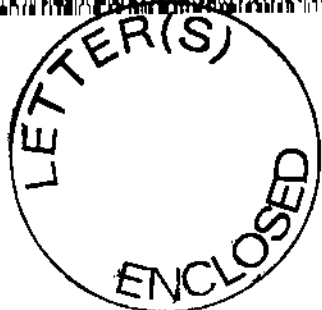
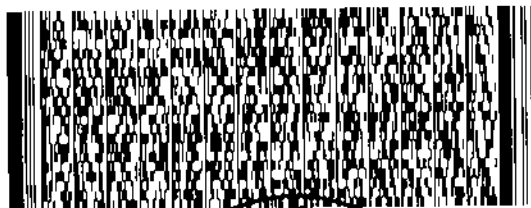
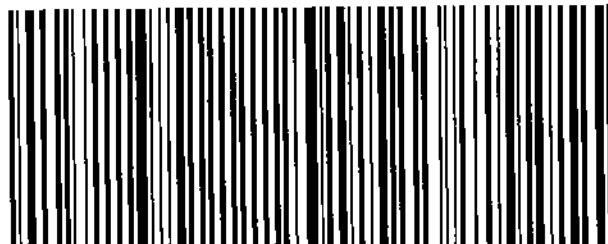
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U.S. Customs and
Border Protection

NOV 14 2006

Most Reverend (b) (6)
Bishop of Spokane
President, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops
(b) (6)
Washington, D.C. 20017-1104

Your Excellency:

Thank you for your letter of concern regarding H.R. 6061, the *Secure Fence Act*, sent October 10, 2006 to President George W. Bush. I commend the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the role you play in many charitable and social welfare activities throughout the United States and internationally.

On October 26, 2006, President Bush signed into law H.R. 6061, the *Secure Fence Act of 2006*. The bill authorizes the construction of fencing and includes additional provisions to implement surveillance technologies and other advanced communication tools to assist U.S. Customs and Border Protection in gaining operational control of the United States borders with Mexico and Canada.

We believe the *Secure Fence Act of 2006* will aid U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents in the fulfillment of their mission to prevent terrorists and their weapons, including weapons of mass destruction, from entering the United States. As you may be aware, CBP is currently implementing the Secure Border Initiative (SBI), a comprehensive multi-year plan to secure America's borders and to reduce illegal immigration. SBI will augment CBP's approach to border control by adding the most effective mix of proven new technology, infrastructure, personnel and response platforms. When completed, SBI will integrate all of these systems with traditional infrastructure (fencing, vehicle barriers, etc.) into a complete border security solution.

The U.S. Border Patrol recently found that deaths along the U.S. border with Mexico and the number of undocumented immigrants captured had declined by nine percent during fiscal 2006 year. It is our estimation that these declining numbers represent the combined effort between increased personnel, new surveillance technology, and the additional presence of our National Guard at the border. We believe that as CBP increases border security measures under SBI and *SBI-net*, these numbers will continue to decline.

I appreciate your letter and your organization's desire to help defend human life. By defending our borders with the latest technology, infrastructure, and additional well-trained personnel, and by maintaining vigilant interior enforcement of our nation's immigration laws, we will fulfill our mission to protect our country and its citizens. At the same time we will also ensure that those wishing to enter our country do so through legal channels, preventing the loss of life created by arduous illegal border crossing attempts.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at (202) (b) (6)

Sincerely,

(b) (6)

Executive Director
Secure Border Initiative